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**PREPARATION OF REPLICATING MACROPHAGES AND
USE IN DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY**

RELATED APPLICATION INFORMATION

[0001] This Application claims benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of U.S. provisional application serial no. 60/249,762, entitled "PREPARATION OF HUMAN KUPFFER CELLS OBTAINED FROM HCV INFECTED PATIENTS BY FINE NEEDLE BIOPSY TECHNIQUE", filed on November 17, 2000, which is incorporated by reference herein including any figures and drawings.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to the preparation and use of replicating macrophages including replicating human Kupffer cells *in vitro*.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Animals, including mammals, avians and reptiles have a variety of phagocytic cells or macrophages both circulating and fixed in tissues which are a part of the immune system. Macrophages contribute to the innate immune system as well as the acquired immune system, the latter involving presentation of foreign antigens to lymphocytes and elaboration of cytokine or lymphokine immune effector molecules. Such macrophages include blood monocytes, liver Kupffer cells, fixed tissue macrophages, dendritic cells including follicular dendritic cells of lymph nodes and spleen and skin dendritic cells also known as Langerhan's cells.

[0004] Kupffer's cells (KC) are large fixed macrophages which along with endothelial cells, make up the linings of the walls of the sinusoids of the liver. In humans, the liver is a vital organ, the second largest organ in the body, and very complex in function. Hepatocytes account for about 70% of the liver cell population and are

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